

What Participants Say About the Spiritual Direction Ministry Formation Program

The Spiritual Direction Ministry Formation Program far exceeded my expectations. In addition to excellent content, reading and lecture material, the discussions generated by the group were informative, clarifying and challenging. The leadership/facilitators of the program were warm, encouraging and role models for our development as Spiritual Directors. The residencies at Sacred Heart Monastery balanced presentation, discussion, practice, and times for fellowship and prayer. I would highly recommend this program for anyone who feels a call in their life to pursue a ministry in Spiritual Direction. *Steven B. Blum, Ph.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist*

The Spiritual Direction Formation Program illuminates God's love for us all and offers tools to assist others in recognizing how this unconditional love is expressed in their own lives. *Deacon Chet Cordell*

Listening to the Wisdom of the Heart Spiritual Direction Ministry Formation Program is outstanding intellectually, psycho-spiritually and resourcefully. This program is an invaluable empowerment for those discerning a call to provide spiritual direction. I couldn't be more grateful for this holy experience of growth, challenge, self-knowledge, prayer, support and highest integrity in its every aspect. *Mary Katherine Daniels, OCDS*

The Spiritual Direction Program at the Peace Center was an excellent place for me to gain the tools to be a competent Spiritual Director as part of my ministry as a deacon in my parish. More wonderful, the program was a faith journey that enriched all of my own life as I seek union with God! I have grown spiritually — it's a wonderful opportunity to be part of an open and loving community of seekers of God's presence, as well as the tools to become spiritual directors. Ss. Jeanne, Doris, and Mary Jo are great teachers and mentors for Spiritual Directors. I have gotten the tools I need to serve in this ministry. *Deacon Denny Davis*

The work is challenging at times, but always taught with grace. I loved learning from my fellow students as much as the teachers, particularly given the ecumenical nature of the group. *Rev. Jay Denne, Pastor, ELCA Lutheran*

Participating in this program was one of the greatest, most enriching experiences of my life. I grew both personally and professionally and gained a solid foundation for my spiritual direction ministry. *Pastor Judy A. Fitzgerald, Minister for Congregational Care, SouthPointe Christian Church, Lincoln, NE*

This was a rich and profound experience for me personally and also for my ministry. *Kristi Gullickson, MDiv., Hospice Chaplain*

The Spiritual Direction Ministry Formation Program at Benedictine Peace Center was beyond anything I expected. I truly experienced "formation". Through the rich materials provided for reading, reflection and classes my heart and mind were being formed into a spiritual director. I never imagined how much I would learn about myself. I have grown in love and in my spiritual life. My understanding of prayer and the spiritual life has expanded to depths I did not know existed. The program is a gift to God's People. *Teresa Lanowich, Plantation, FL*

The Spiritual Direction Program was a great blessing and a wonderful learning experience for me. I feel that it is helpful to me in my own spiritual journey as well as companioning others along their own path. It has stretched me and helped me grow in faith. *Sharon R. Haas, Chaplain, Pastoral Care*

This spiritual direction program offers an effective combination of mind-learning, heart-experiences, and spirit-empowerment. The sisters who lead this program are gifted human beings who gently nudge and guide us so that we might be ministers to others. Listening to the Wisdom of the Heart provides so much more than just training in spiritual direction. With this experience we are also invited to deepen our relationship with God, gain a better understanding of sacred writings, and develop our own small community of spiritual directors. I treasure this experience and believe it is truly formational in my own spiritual journey. *Charlotte Liggett*

Being a participant in the Spiritual Direction Ministry Formation Program has not only prepared me to be an effective spiritual director but has also enriched my own spiritual life as well. I am most grateful for all blessings received through the program. The program is excellent because it combines the elements of information and formation. It helped me notice God's presence and actions not only in my own life but also in the lives of others. The program offers prayerful guidance to a director who desires to be a companion to others, intent on deepening their relationship with God. An additional richness to the program is its openness to be interdenominational. I am most grateful for all blessings received through the program. *Sister Kathleen McGearry, OSB*

I am aware that training in Spiritual Direction is becoming more widely available. Many varied models for teaching are being used. One characteristic that has become especially meaningful to me about the program at Sacred Heart Monastery Peace Center is that this is not a "course" or a "training program" at the core. Rather, we have journeyed together as a covenant group through a *formation* process. The rich diversity of Christian traditions has enhanced our interactions. The four residencies have each been excellent touch points of transformational learning. The structure of each term has been informed by historical and mystical roots of spiritual direction balanced by current insights. I have also found the modules to be very holistic - respecting and connection spiritual development with the physical "body" as well as "soulful" aspects of mind, will and emotion. The "hands on" year of supervised practicum was invaluable!

Our leaders are excellent teachers who have led us to discover the ways of the heart with a healthy balance of didactic instruction, readings, and forum discussions. I have confidence in their instruction and advice because of their many years of offering spiritual direction. As a non-Roman Catholic working with these devoted Benedictine Sisters, I have been warmly received and my own traditions and theological constructs have been honored. In fact, the diversity of doctrinal backgrounds in our cohort has added a very rich component and only served to deepen our love and empathy for one another as we journey together. I cannot imagine a more complete and balanced way to learn the art of spiritual direction. It is truly a journey of the heart. *Laura O'Neill, MS DABR, Medical Physicist (lay person)*

From beginning to end, this program has been exceptional. As people were seeking me out for deep conversations, I felt the need for training. I have learned so much about myself and my own journey, and so much insight about listening to others in the presence of God. If you are looking for a rich, insightful and empowering experience, look no further. *Rev. Dr. Larry V. Ort*